

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The present application is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/505,283, filed on February 16, 2000. Claims 138-153 are present in this application. Claims 1-137 are canceled by way of the present amendment. Accordingly, examination on the merits is in order, and an early and favorable decision is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Carl E. Schlier
Registration No. 34,426

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

EHK/CES/maj
I:\ATTY\CES\247830US.PREAM_012104.DOC